

IELTS Writing Sample #42

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Learning a foreign language offers an insight into how people from other cultures think and see the world. The teaching of a foreign language should be compulsory at all primary schools.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view? You should write at least 250 words. Allow yourself 40 minutes for this task. You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples.

model answer: (Clear statement followed by a question based on the premise.)

Language is linked to the identity of a nation, and speakers of a common language share many things, but does this give governments the right to restrict the way a language is used or taught?

(Concession made to the "For" case, but followed by the Against' point of view. An example is given which comments on the likely effectiveness of such a policy.)

It can be argued that a nation maintains its culture through its language, and so there is a need to restrict the use of foreign words and changes in pronunciation. However, in reality this approach is fruitless, because language is a living thing and it is impossible to stop it from changing. This policy has been tried in some countries, but it never works. People, especially young people, will use the language that they hear around them, and which separates them from others; stopping the use of certain words will only make them appear more attractive.

(Puts the case Against' governments preventing spelling reform, but concedes it may be useful.)

As for spelling, we all know that the English system is irregular and, I believe, it would benefit from simplification so that children and other learners do not waste time learning to read and write. On the other hand, some people may feel, perhaps rightly, that it is important to keep the original spelling of words as a link with the past and this view is also held by speakers of languages which do not use the Roman alphabet.

(Puts both sides of the argument about which language to use in schools.)

While it is important for people who speak a minority language to be able to learn and use that language, it is practical for education to be in a common language. This creates national pride and links people within the society. Realistically, schools are the best place for this to start.

(Ends with a clear statement.)

Ultimately, there is a role for governments to play in the area of language planning, particularly in education, but at no time should governments impose regulations which restrict people's linguistic freedom.

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